

## **Increasing Diversity Should be Paramount in Review of AT&T-T-Mobile Merger**

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The clock has started ticking for the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), which must review the proposed merger of AT&T and T-Mobile. While the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) typically does not take positions on such mergers, we believe the review process presents a good opportunity for the FCC and other regulatory agencies to both take into account and more importantly take action to strengthen diversity in the media and telecommunications sector.

T-Mobile's track record with regard to the Latino community leaves much to be desired. For example, although T-Mobile USA is more than a decade old, it only launched its Hispanic outreach effort less than two years ago. In addition, American Rights at Work, a nonprofit organization, recently issued a report blasting T-Mobile for its active hostility toward unionizing efforts among its employees, in direct contrast to the policy of its parent company, Deutsche Telekom.

While there is always room for improvement, we see a ray of hope in AT&T's historic and ongoing commitment to diversity. AT&T and its predecessor companies have been pioneers in this field when it comes to the Hispanic community. Their relationship with the community dates back decades. It is therefore not surprising that AT&T has one of the most diverse and representative workforces in the industry, including at the highest levels of the company. In addition, we note that according to the National Minority Supplier Development Council, AT&T has one of the strongest minority procurement records of any company, regardless of industry. It is little wonder then that Hispanic Business, DiversityInc, and other magazines have bestowed numerous "best of" awards on AT&T in recent years.

We recognize that the policy debate on the proposed merger has focused on complex and often arcane questions related to the availability of the 4G spectrum and the likely impact of increased market concentration on pricing and innovation—issues of which NCLR cannot claim extensive expertise. However, as the FCC and the Department of Justice move forward in this process, we hope and expect that improving diversity will be a cornerstone of whatever they ultimately decide.